

EFFECTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

The board should meet as frequently as is needed to fully and adequately conduct the business of the organization. The minimum for most organizations is four times a year. Meetings should be organized to accomplish the business of the organization and maximize the board members' investment of time. What makes for a good meeting? The following guidelines will help to ensure productive meetings:

- Plan well in advance
- Provide concise, written background information, such as meeting agenda, financial statements, and major issues to be discussed to board members in advance of the meeting
- Handle logistical details upfront, including: directions to the meeting location, date and time, audio-visual needs, seating arrangements, etc.
- Effectively manage the meeting: begin and end on time, keep to the point, enable discussion and input from all members, record votes or agreements by consensus
- Follow the agenda, distinguishing action items from other discussion and setting time limits for discussions
- Provide time for executive sessions, as necessary, to be held without staff present (usually for personnel reasons, such as executive director annual review)
- Allow for a social component, such as meals, breaks, or evening events following the meeting
- Hold a board retreat or strategic planning meeting once a year to build teamwork and provide adequate time to review and plan for the work of the organization
- Keep written minutes reflecting the actions of the board, including reports of board committees when acting in the place of the board. The minutes should be distributed to board and committee members.